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For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

THE AUCTION.

Continued from No. VIII. P. 188.

Mercury.

I NOW bring before you, gentlemen, the celebrated Mrs. C. I consider it unnecessary to say any thing respecting her, her valuable qualities having been so very fully detailed in the Newspapers. She is worth at least 1000*l*. Jupiter. In truth I think so, and though I be a little past my prime, I think I will give that for her myself—I used to be a good judge of the pretty girls. Reach me my spectacles, I dont see so well as I used to do.—Ah ha! by my faith, this is not so bad: what do you think, Mercury? Zounds! fellow, she's the very thing. There shant be another word. She's mine. But Mercury, for heaven's sake, dont let Juno know any thing of this business—For if it come to her ears, I shant have a moment's peace. Juno, you know, watches like a dragon: I'm seldom out on the prowl half an hour, till she's at my heels. Mer. Never fear. I'll keep her close, I warrant you; and should there be any danger of detection, I can easily change her into a sow or a goose. Jup. Very well: I'll rely on your discretion and good sense. Yon recollect, how, on former occasions, I have been more than once disagreeably surprized.

Mer. Gentlemen, we deal much, as you will perceive, in the female part of the creation. It would be tedious to set up the ladies we have on hands singly; I shall therefore give you a lot of damsels. They are so plenty with us, that I think we had better put them up in half dozens. Bid. I am afraid that wont answer. If the girls you set up be greatly different from one another, I fear no one will be disposed to purchase. For my part I shant bid for them in this way. I think you had better deal them out one by one, and use all the despatch you can. Mer. That would delay us too much; we have here not fewer than five hundred, all of them in great want of husbands. Sure if I set them up by dozens or scores, a set of you can join about

them, make a joint purchase, and dispose of them afterwards among yourselves. Bid. That wont do; you'll find that where one girl is richer than another, all will be looking after her; and there will be no end of quarrelling and fighting. For my part, I intend to look only after the girls that have heavy purses. Jup. It seems to be the general wish that you should set them up one by one. Try that mode, and begin with heavy metal. It is too much the way of the world now, to make no objections to the bitterest pill, provided it be well gilded. I adopted a very different mode when I was five and twenty, I followed after those girls only that possessed spunk and beauty, money was no object with me. Mer. I set up a lady, gentlemen, who is surrounded with the blaze of twenty thousand charms! as to her personal qualities and accomplishments you must judge for yourselves. Bid. Ay now, that is something like: I fancy we are all of one opinion respecting this commodity. 2*d* Bid. As to money; it is very well. But in other points, I have some objections to her. 1*st* Bid. Have you? O you blockhead! object to a girl with twenty thousand pounds! Surely you jest. 2*d* Bid. No, I assure you. There are several things I dont like. 1*st* Bid. What? 2*d* Bid. Do you know the objection the man had to the cow he was about to purchase? 1*st* Bid. No. 2*d* Bid. Then I will tell you; she had too many nicks in her horn. 1*st* Bid. I understand you. But let us ask the lady herself on this head. Pray Madam, may I take the liberty of inquiring concerning your age? *Lady Whistle*, most certainly. I am just turned of twenty. 1*st* Bid. There now, what objection can you make to a lady just turned of twenty, with twenty thousand pounds. 2*d* Bid. She has forty nicks in her horn at least. An unmarried lady, you know, never exceeds, according to her own account, twenty or twenty-five at farthest. But when seams, in each of which you may lay a goose quill, variegate the visage, the proprietor may fairly be dated on the wrong side of forty. These are the decorations of age, and indicate experience.

1st Bid. Well, well, experience is a good thing. I don't care what you say; I am determined to have a bid at her. 2d Bid. You are perfectly welcome for me. But, pray, did you ever see the lady before? 1st Bid. Not I, truly. 2d Bid. And you intend taking her without farther ceremony! 1st Bid. Certainly. 2d Bid. And without feeling any tender passion for her! 1st Bid. To be sure. 2d Bid. O well, well, I have nothing farther to say: I perceive you and I go on very different principles. 1st Bid. Why now, what wise principles of philosophy do you condescend to honour with your acceptance? 2d Bid. Simply this, I should like to love a female, before I thought of making her my wife. 1st Bid. Then if you should happen to love a girl without a sixpence, you would perhaps marry her! 2d Bid. Perhaps I might. 1st Bid. O very well, you are a novel reader, I suppose; you are a little romantic in your views, I perceive; marry a girl without a farthing, roam the wide world along with her, and at length set her down, perhaps, in some humble cottage in the Pyrenees, with an unbreeched offspring, poor and happy! Ah! ha! ha! ha! very good, upon my honour. I must confess Mr. philosopher, your philosophy does not suit my kidney at all. Give me the hard cash, and a fig for your tender passions and your nonsense. 2d Bid. Well then, you should change the names of things. You should say, I intend marrying, not the girl of my affections, but simply and plainly, a piece of household stuff, value twenty thousand pounds—or rather perhaps plainly, I intend marrying myself to twenty thousand pounds. 1st Bid. Well well, you may say what you like. But for that matter, one girl is as good as another, and a lass with twenty thousand shillings may prove to be a wife to all intents and purposes, just as completely as one of your philosophic ladies, with all their fine affections. I assure you, Sir, it is all a joke, you must have been reading novels and romances. But however, you and I shant quarrel; I will try for this damsel, and you may look for some of the girls who have plenty of love; that will serve you: I must

have something more substantial, I assure you. 2d Bid. But now, suppose you and this lady do not agree in mind and temper, suppose you are continually quarreling and fighting, as is sometimes the case in married life, will your twenty thousand pounds compensate for all the troubles and distractions you may bring upon yourself by marrying her? 1st Bid. O, never fear! I will have a wife and rule a wife. I will bring her to temper I warrant you, or if I should find her not fit for such a wicked world as this, I can send her to another. That would be effectual relief: I can never be at a loss. And then, my dear boy, my twenty thousand pounds may find means of marrying other twenty thousand pounds, which will make the snug sum of forty thousand pounds. Eh, fellow! there is some sense in that philosophy, I believe; and forty thousand may, by successive generation, produce a plum, the summit of my ambition—Bravo, bravissimo! 2d Bid. I have heard all this without emotion or conviction. I do not say that a girl is the worse for having a fortune; but this I do say, that he who marries the woman he does not love, on account of her fortune or connexions, miserably perverts the intention of nature, and deserves to lose his happiness in the married state. And I say, further, that millions were a poor compensation for the want of that domestic bliss, which is one of the richest ingredients in the cup of human life. It fires me with indignation when I see every day matches formed merely on the foundation of interest, as if the noblest affections of our nature were of no account; and as if it were allowable by the author of nature to sacrifice to temporal views, the finest and most exquisite sympathies of the human soul. Jup. Gentlemen, if you get on in this way, we shall never have done. I conceive that you are now perfectly out of order; I will allow the bidders to ask these wenches any question they may think proper, but by no means to dispute and wrangle with one another. Your conversation, gentlemen, has not altered my mind in the least, I do think now, and I always thought, that it is very natural and

proper for a man to like a girl before he thinks of marrying her. There now, let that rest. The point at present gentlemen is, who will give most for this damsel now before you. 2d Bid. I will not have her at all, I find she is very proud, whimsical and ill-natured. 1st Bid. Is it so, Mercury, that I can only enjoy her fortune during her life? *Mer.* It is, you will have 6 per cent on 20,000 pounds, for that time. 1st Bid. This alters the case materially. The point now is, how many years' purchase she is worth? I will chance seven years, and deduct 1 per cent on account of her pride and ill-nature. *Mer.* Very well, take her. I wish you much joy; but I fear you will have a good deal of sorrow. 2d Bid. I think the gilding will be off the pill before the honey-moon be over.

A. Z.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

ON reading your Magazine for May last, I was highly pleased in observing in it a paper "on the comparative strength of Barilla and Potash," as it displays a wish to take notice of whatever relates to the good of the country, and particularly to that of its staple manufacture. The following queries, which occurred to me on the perusal, are now offered to your consideration.

1. The writer mentions that 0 indicates the specific gravity of water, at some given temperature, by his hydrometer, without mentioning the temperature: the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. may reasonably be supposed to be gradations, as the figures express: perhaps they are the ounces of alkaline salt soluble in a gallon of water. But is the Barilla or Potash always free from all other soluble matter so that the specific gravity will show its value correctly according to these numbers?

2. Does Barilla part with its salt as freely to water as potash, when both are treated in the same manner; or may it not happen that when both are treated alike, the Barilla has not parted with all its salt, when the Potash has; and may not this occasion an error?

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3. Are Alkalies equally soluble in a mild and caustic state? If not, I should suppose, that this may occasion an error.

4. If alkaline solutions be valuable according to the good effect they have in bleaching, does it always follow that the effect is according to their specific gravities, or not; if not, how can the specific gravities be a true mode of finding the value of alkalies?

5. If alkalies are equally pure in their soluble parts, as in query 1st. and equally yield their salt to water as in query 2nd. and are also equally soluble in their mild and caustic state, as in query 3d. if by rendering them less mild, by depriving them of part of their fixed air after solution, the fluid lose part of its specific gravity, can the hydrometer show their value, unless that in losing part of their specific gravity, their good effect in bleaching is lessened also?

Perhaps some of your Correspondents may answer some of these queries, which may be of use to many, besides yours, Z.

Belfast, July 1, 1809.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

I HAVE noticed in your Magazine for June last, in the Ramble to Antrim, an erroneous expression of the writer, respecting his fellow-traveller, though without any malignant intention on his part, where he says, "it is said he has studied himself into infidelity; but is reckoned among the best of unbelievers;" from every observation that I could make, and an early acquaintance, I must do the person here alluded to that justice, to assert that he is not an-unbeliever, though he despises the superstition of a bigot, and would sometimes laugh at an old wife's fable. As to the religion of others, it is a question which he wishes to avoid, as he considers, in this country in particular, such discussion, in stead of promoting that love and benevolence so wisely enjoined, but too frequently degenerates into hatred and animosity, which has been too long the great cause of internal discord and political debasement.

H.

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